SANTA ROSA COUNTY
FLORIDA

Animal Care

Owning and caring for an animal can be a rewarding and fulfilling experience for many people, but it's also a great responsibility that is not for everyone. People should fully understand how much time, patience, effort and money it takes to properly care for an animal before they get one. Pets should not be an "impulse" item, but an addition to your family after carefully evaluating everything that comes with ownership.

Proper care is costly. Estimates for owning a traditional pet for one year:

	Dog		Cat		Horse	
	1st year	each year after	1st year	each year after	1st year	each year after
Food*	$300	$300	$175	$175	$661	$661
Vet	$250	$185	$200	$60	$250	$250
Other** (leashes, collars, cages, etc.)	$150	$100	$200	$150	$760	$760
Total costs	**$700**	**$585**	**$575**	**$385**	**$1,671**	**$1,671**

(Estimates compiled from www.peteducation.com)

*Dog cost is for 50 lb. dog; costs will vary with size. Horse food includes higher quality sweet feed (2 lb./day@ .28/lb.) and alfalfa hay (3.65 tons @ $125/ton) for pleasure horses. Working horses are normally fed a cheaper alfalfa/grass mix hay.

**Costs will vary. Continuing items include cat litter, dog toys, horse shoeing, etc. Substantial extra costs may be incurred for some unincluded items such as fencing - or for vet bills because of unplanned injury or illness.

Of course, these costs are doubled for a second animal, two dogs will cost over $1,100 per year; two horses well over $3,000. There's also a considerable time investment needed for an animal. Dogs need to be washed, walked and cleaned up after. Cats don't usually need as much playing time as dogs, but their litter boxes need changing. Horse care requires maintenance of a barn and stalls - no small task. And all animals need food - which means shopping for the food and then giving it to the animal every day along with water. During hot and cold months, extra care must be given to keep animals cool or warm, especially when they're outside.

Cruelty and Neglect

Animal cruelty and neglect are serious ongoing problems for Animal Services. **Cruelty** can be thought of as intentional mistreatment of an animal while **neglect** is usually considered unintentional. To intentionally mistreat an animal is a felony in Florida; unintentional neglect is a misdemeanor.

Trooper - A Cruelty Case With a Happy Ending

In 2005, a three-year old Welsh Corgi was severely beaten by his intoxicated owner. Animal Services investigated the owner's blood-spattered motel room and found the slobbering, bloody dog cowering under a bed. He had been beaten and poked repeatedly with a sharp piece of wood. One eye was gouged out, there

Trooper after his recovery

were large lumps on the head, and a possible fractured pelvis. The dog was confiscated and given treatment. The owner was prosecuted and sentenced to two years probation on the condition that he not keep any more animals and pay for the dog's vet bills. Animal Services workers renamed the dog "Trooper" and nursed him slowly back to health.

Thankfully, Trooper's story has a happy ending. He was adopted by a loving home after his recovery.

Santa Rosa County Animal Services
4451 Pine Forest Road
Milton, FL 32583
(850) 983-4680
Offices and shelter are open to the public Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Spaying and Neutering

Many people do not spay or neuter their animals. They may not think this is a serious matter, but what happens is a terrible result for anyone who loves animals.

When people fail to spay and neuter their dogs and cats, unwanted ones multiply and cause problems. They tear apart garbage when looking for food. Stray dogs are often dangerous and can bite people. Then the animals are captured and impounded - most of them, over 70 percent of those received by county Animal Services, eventually have to be euthanized!

Spaying or neutering your pet can make a huge difference. Just take a look at these staggering numbers:

- ✖ Average number of litters a fertile cat can produce in one year: 3
- ✖ Average number of kittens in a feline litter: 4-6
- ✖ In seven years, **one female cat** and her offspring can theoretically produce <u>420,000 cats</u>!
- ✖ Average number of litters a fertile dog can produce in one year: 2
- ✖ Average number of puppies in a canine litter: 6-10
- ✖ In six years, **one female dog** and her offspring can theoretically produce **<u>67,000 dogs</u>**!

Animal Services ends up with many animals who don't have homes. Although people can adopt animals like these puppies, lack of space and other factors results in most of the animals being humanely euthanized.

Santa Rosa County Numbers
From October 1, 2007 to September 30

- 8,750 animals taken in by Santa Rosa County Animal Services.
- 2,592 were surrendered by their owners.
- Only 1,903 animals were adopted, transferred to rescue or returned to their owner.
- 6,847 were humanely euthanized.